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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000229

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SUBJECT: USEB 143: SUNNIS WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT SAYS
INFORMED SOURCE

(U) CLASSIFIED BY POL-MIL COUNSELOR RONALD E. NEUMANN FOR
REASONS 1.4 (A) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. Sunnis are hostile, divided, leaderless, and unable to envision a political solution acceptable to others according to a very well-informed Jordanian diplomat. Some would like to enter into an agreement with us to resume rule, an approach we find illusionary. End summary.

¶2. (C) Pol Counselor Ford and Pol-Mil Counselor Neumann met July 20 with Jordanian Charge Demi Haddad (strictly protect). Haddad has extensive Sunni contacts built up over several years in Iraq. He reports that more Sunnis than ever are coming through his doors. The picture he painted was depressing. Haddad said that after nearly 100 years of repressive rule the Sunnis cannot envision a situation in which they can protect their interests without domination. The only alternative appears to be permanent suppression. Although outsiders see the potential for an alliance with the Kurds to block Shi'ite domination, Haddad said there is too much bloodshed between the communities. The logic might work in another decade but the Sunnis do not believe in it now.

¶3. (C) There are multiple Sheikhs and sheikh-ly contenders in the Sunni ranks. There is no agreement on leadership among them. Efforts to consolidate under any one leader meet internal opposition. Without a single strong leader to give form to new ideas, the tribesmen fall back into hostility and resentment.

¶4. (C) Haddad said he finds the Sunnis chasing half-formed conceptions. Several Sheikhs have suggested that the only way to impose leadership on Iraq is to return to a monarchy. But they cannot name an acceptable candidate. They typify Sharif Ali as the "son of an Egyptian whore." They believe the U.S. is hostile to Prince Hassan bin Tallal of Jordan and therefore discount him. A third candidate is said to be timid and attracts no support. Yet Sunni Sheikhs continue to argue for a monarchy as a principle, even though they cannot figure out how it would work.

¶5. (C) Some of the Sheikhs continue to hope they can make a "deal" to rule Iraq in return for concessions to U.S. interests. This view is supported by many conversations we have had that focus on themes of "give us jobs, pay us" and all will be calm. "You can realize your American interests and we'll all be rich."

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Clearly not every Sunni falls into this description. Yet it suggests that for many the continued fighting is seen as their only alternative to being ruled. Their image of a deal to make them again the rulers of Iraq strikes us as fanciful.

¶7. (C) The Shia genie is out of the bottle. The Kurds have too many memories of suppression to go down the Sunni road. And the Sunni themselves are far too divided to make

and keep a bargain. Probably the best we can hope for is that as the IIG gains credibility and strength, Sunni elements will decide, incrementally, to cut deals to join a process they cannot stop. Some, like President Ghazi, have already made their accommodation.

NEGROPONTE